By 2020 We Rise Up
Demands and transition pathways

0. PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

This is an advisory document created based on needs expressed by By 2020 supporting groups.
We want to provide three things:
- Inspiration for those who want or need to be inspired for their demands – we are not reinventing the wheel, but providing resources and research-based example.
- Crucial conditions, or red lines, to be taken into account for if/when we pose demands.
- Inspiration on radicality, for demands should not be too easily full-fillable.

1. DIFFERENT APPROACHES TO DEMANDS

We acknowledge that groups and initiatives who will unite for a wave of action in autumn 2019 create their own demands, as best fits their national or local context and agenda. Some will not want demands at all, or would prefer to call some or all of them "aims", "goals" or "visions" rather than "demands". Our demands are built bottom-up, and groups and initiative do not wait for EU-level alignment before publishing their demands. At the Rhineland meeting it was clear that the goal should be not just limiting emissions, but fighting for a *socially just* transition, and we expect that this will generally inform whatever is chosen in the way of demands.

We have identified these basic types of demands:
- **Very broad demands**: "system change", "climate justice", "zero emissions by 2050"
- **Demands about proper political process** for dealing with the climate crisis: "declare a climate emergency", "establish citizen assemblies", "end fossil fuels"
- **Socially popular demands** which are or may be impossible in the current political context: e.g. dramatic drop in working hours, income for caring work, end the arms trade/wars/military expenditure, workers' and community control of production
- A **Green New Deal for Europe**, developing a detailed, comprehensive and realistic transition plan and working to mobilise citizens, activists, scientists, unions and think tanks behind it.
- **Red lines demands** - demands to ensure that transition is not at the expense of those who have least to begin with, demands to ensure that the technology used to reduce emissions actually does so and is not a con, or unsafe etc. These are usually concrete and detail-specific.

2. DEMANDS FOR CLIMATE JUSTICE: RESEARCH AND INSPIRATION

We consider the most ambitious scenario to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees, as described by the IPCC Special Report in October 2018, to be the example to follow. It's important to realize that the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) provides advice on technological solutions to mitigating greenhouse emissions and limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees – but it does not give any advice on what kinds of social, cultural, economic, and political change we need to make. The IPCC only states that these changes need to be very significant.

There are serious differences between sticking to 1.5 degrees of warming, and going beyond this limit – the consequences include increased loss of species, more harm to animal, plant and human life thought extreme weather events, higher risk of epidemics, loss of nutritional value in basic foods, especially grain and rice, and also higher loss of agricultural crops, millions more people threatened by famine. There are however multiple global (technical) pathways to limit global

warming to 1.5 degrees.

Scenario 1 of the IPCC is a *„scenario in which social, business and technological innovations result in lower energy demand up to 2050 while living standards rise, especially in the global South. A downsized energy system enables rapid decarbonization of energy supply. Afforestation is the only CDR option considered; neither fossil fuels with CCS nor BECCS are used.“*

In this scenario, we can still avoid negative consequences of climate change for sustainability, poverty and inequality, if we maximize synergies and minimize trade-offs (that is, compromises against social justice). These are unprecedented changes in our energy, agricultural and financial systems – they do not necessarily have to happen very fast, but they must happen on a global scale. We have less than 12 years to act, and **we have the year 2020 to make a collective global decision about how we will act**. With a series of major international conferences setting targets for governments and international enforcement mechanisms, this one year will have a lasting and critical impact on the history of life on earth. If we act now, we can decrease poverty and inequality as well as aborting climate melt-down – but we will need change in the system (policy, financial flows) and change in human behaviour, all at the same time.

The IPCC best-case 1.5 scenario describes changes in financial flows, energy systems and emission cuts very precisely, but does not define the fundamental societal transformation we need. **Climate science does not provide a vision for how society needs to rebuild to avoid the worst of the climate crisis – but this vision of social change is crucial to our ability to deal with and live through the climate crisis.** This creates a lot of space for visions from civic initiatives and organizations which cross between a social transition and environmental policy. The following list is far from exhaustive but should provide sufficient examples and inspiration:

- People's Demands
- Reclaim Power demands
- Lausanne climate declaration
- Climate Strike Switzerland demands (French and German only)
- 10 pillars and report of the Green New Deal for Europe
- US youth climate strike demands
- 4-day work week campaign by Autonomy
- Documents kindly provided by Fuel Poverty Action:
  - Demands on the occasion of the global climate strike on 20.09.2019
  - List of possible pricing and housing demands
  - Notes on carbon taxing, subsidies and protections

3. REDLINES AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CLIMATE JUSTICE

Urgency

- New targets, frameworks, and negotiations have failed to impede the race to catastrophe. Action must be immediate, with concrete changes visible by 2020 proportionate to the scale of the emergency. By2020WeRiseUp is premised on the fact that there is very little time left and 2020

is a critically important year.

Awareness of impact / No false solutions

- For every technological demand that we make there must be a clear understanding of the impact of that solution, and its connection to changes in the economy and decision-making processes.

- We reject so called "green capitalism". Any technological solution which is dependent on rare and valuable resources must not lead to another cycle of exploitative extraction from the global South or elsewhere.

- Solutions must be safe for people - e.g. insulation must not be toxic or flammable, and safe for future life on earth. They must not displace carbon emissions from one place to another, from one source to another, or to the future.

Neglected topics

- We must achieve a wholesale transformation of our systems of production, consumption, and social relations — rewiring our systems of material production for reproduction.

- We must drastically reduce consumption of energy and resources; our economy must be based on creating good lives for all, rather than on creating profits and waste

- The financial system must switch from short-term gains to investing in long-term visions.

- We need to include demands for valuing caring work – which is low on emissions and is unpaid, or minimally rewarded by society.

- We should include demands for cutting military budgets which in some cases (e.g. the Pentagon) represent the biggest investors and the biggest polluters on the planet.

Responsibility and fairness

- Europe and the Global North have to make deeper changes to eliminate carbon emissions than the rest of the world

- Change should not be paid for by people who are already struggling to care for themselves and each other. It should not be based on exploitation of people and resources in the Global South.

- Adaptations to limit as far as possible the damage caused by the changing climate; immediate support and compensation as required for those whose homes or livelihoods are destroyed or who do the work of restoring their communities after extreme weather events.

Money/finance

- Include demands to ensure that any infrastructure needed for a transition to renewable energy and energy efficiency should be funded by transferring subsidies and investment away from fossil fuels and war, ending tax injustice, avoidance and evasion, and prioritising needs over luxuries.

- Green taxes and who is paying: Include demands for concrete measures to protect living standards from the effects of any green taxes.

Inclusion and diversity

- Everything must change – but not at the expense of disadvantaged groups of people, whether in country or in other geographies
- The transition must be inclusive and intersectional – incorporating the contributions made by people of colour, people in the global south, people with less money and social power, and always based on full public debate. If white middle class professionals are at the table, they must demand places or give up their own place for the groups which are not there.

4. AIMS OF DEMANDS

Facing the urgency of the climate crisis, we shouldn't be asking for better policy goals but aiming at immediate change. It is important to state that aims aren't necessarily identical with demands! Your aim is where you want to get to, a demand is merely a tactical tool to get there. In the context of By2020WeRiseUp, there are three general aims of demands:

A.) Staying below 1.5°C global warming without geoengineering

- Phasing out fossil fuel extraction and use (ASAP, heavily dependent on context)

- Terminating fossil fuel investments (immediately)

- Terminating fossil fuel subsidies (ASAP/immediately)

- Terminating the influence of the fossil fuel industry (immediately)

- Adaptations to limit as far as possible the damage caused by the changing climate

B.) Climate Justice:

- Recognition of the impact of demands on different sections of the global community particularly those often disadvantaged

- Global and historical justice

- Intergenerational justice

C.) Just transition

- Those currently on the front-lines of the climate crisis must be protected immediately. This includes recognising the rights of climate refugees and of indigenous peoples, the need for support for destruction of homes and livelihoods, and compensation for the work of restoring communities after extreme weather events.

- Any infrastructure needed for a transition to renewable energy and energy efficiency should be funded by transferring subsidies and investment away from fossil fuels and war, ending tax injustice, avoidance and evasion, and prioritising need over the luxuries of the richest. It should not be paid for by people who are already struggling to care for themselves and each other. It should not be based on exploitation of people and resources in the Global South or elsewhere.

- Retraining and well paid employment for workers in industries related to fossil fuels

- Saving the world should make it a better place; not a worse one. The transition should improve people's lifes:

  - The transition should be a participative process

  - Housing, industry, agriculture, transport, trade, and society in general to be re-formed to sustainably meet the needs of human and other life. This should include the right to energy to meet our daily needs, the right to clean air and water, and the right to safe housing that offers shelter from the changing climate.

  - Instead of promoting unlimited labour and production for profit, policies should be based on human need; on reducing the need for energy; on shared resources e.g. public transport rather than private vehicles; on re-use, repair, recycling; on prioritising care for people, other living things and the environment.

  - An end to waste: of energy, water, mineral and other resources, of consumer products, of labour, creativity, and lives.

5. NOTES ON RADICALITY

The usual logic says that having clear demands increases legitimacy of a movement. However movements which do/did have clear demands are not necessarily more historically impactful than movements *without clear demands*. Having clear demands can, potentially, represent risks for a movement:

Power structures often expect clear demands from movements, because it opens up space for negotiation between the system and the movement. This does not necessarily make a movement more successful - in a negotiation the system always holds more formal power than the movement; the negotiation is biased from the start. Having clear demands may even put the movement into a weaker negotiating position, since a finite list of demands defines the bare minimum for the government/industry to do (and nothing more). **Responding to a popular demand can serve to strengthen a government** ("declare a climate emergency"), **or a corporation** ("support the climate strike"). A good example is banks that stop funding coal – coal is well-known to be a dying area for investment in Western Europe. Therefore to ask a bank to stop funding coal is asking the bank to do what is must do anyway, perhaps just a few years earlier. However, if the bank reacts to popular demand by declaring an end to funding coal, it gains a PR/marketing advantage on top of a necessary change of business model.

Lastly, a movement having demands often goes hand in hand with having speakers who speak those demands and who negotiate on behalf of the movement. This may present a different risk – that of **creating power hierarchies within the movement**; where there are leaders there are targets for pressure. You'll find a more [in-depth reading on the topic of why & why not demand anything here](#).

The following are some (not exhaustive) options for a more radical pathway – many of these are based upon the idea of shifting the [Overton window](#):

- **Take up space without demanding anything** – let the design of your action speak for itself; let your presence say "you cannot ignore us".

- **Do (protect/help) instead of demanding** – many compassionate or logical actions can be illegal in an unsustainable system: it could be illegal to stop a forest cutting; it could be illegal to provide or fund a safe medical abortion; it could be illegal to provide water to refugees, or to interrupt the operation of a coal power plant which is a public health hazard. Taking meaningful protective action in such a system is a statement by itself.

- **Present a new social vision** *to the people* **instead of presenting demands** *to the governments and companies* – it is important to have something inspiring to say in order to occupy public consciousness. You can choose to circumvent the power structures and speak to the people instead.

- If you decide to put forward demands, **demand more than what is considered "realistic" or "reasonable"** – identify demands which are socially attractive, but politically/economically unacceptable (such as, [abolish work](#), unconditional basic income), or demands which are simply a shock to the established order (such as the [all-female emergency cabinet](#) proposed to deal with Brexit).

- If you decide to put forward some demands now, **prepare more radical demands for later** – do not confirm that your demands were fulfilled, as that gives the impression your movement is no longer needed, and positions the powerholders as someone who acts in the interest of the people.

- Do not have speakers; or have many diverse speakers who are cycled and give different points of view – not providing a single voice for the media or a central negotiator to the government can be a powerful move. It also visibly differentiates the movement which has a transformative vision of society.